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Elections to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other elections: election of fifteen members of the Human Rights Council

Letter dated 4 January 2008 from the Permanent Representative of Timor-Leste to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

I have the honour to inform you of the decision of the Government of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste to present its candidature to the Human Rights Council for the term 2008-2011 at the elections to be held in May 2008. As a new member of the United Nations family, Timor-Leste has not yet sought to be elected to an intergovernmental body.

Please find enclosed the voluntary pledges and commitments of Timor-Leste in accordance with General Assembly resolution 60/251 (see annex).

I would appreciate it if the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the General Assembly.

(*Signed*) Nelson **Santos**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex to the letter dated 4 January 2008 from the Permanent Representative of Timor-Leste to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

Timor-Leste's voluntary pledges and commitments in accordance with resolution 60/251

As one of the world's newest nations, independence marked the watershed of our future. A large part of Timor-Leste's struggle was fought on the humanitarian front and Timor-Leste had been actively engaged in the human rights processes, especially vis-à-vis the Geneva-based human rights mechanisms. It now falls upon us to reverberate our hard-won freedom through respect for human dignity in all of our practices. We have integrated the promotion and protection of human rights into all areas of life.

Timor-Leste takes its obligations and duties as party to the numerous conventions and treaties listed below seriously. Of important note is the comprehensive national report submitted in 2006 on the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its two Optional Protocols, in compliance with Article 44 1(a) of the Convention.

As an extension of Timor-Leste's obligations towards upholding the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, during the sixty-second session of the General Assembly, Timor-Leste is an active participant in the work of the Third Committee through sponsoring important resolutions that safeguard the sanctity of human life and protect basic human rights.

Timor-Leste's international commitment to promote human rights

Timor-Leste is committed to striving for the highest standards of human rights around the world and believes that the establishment of the new Human Rights Council is crucial in the promotion and protection of these standards. As Timor-Leste celebrates its 5-year anniversary of independence, the time is ripe to share the unique experiences gained in the field of human rights and the process of national building. Timor-Leste therefore believes that being elected to serve on the Human Rights Council will fulfil an important mission of giving back to the international community.

Timor-Leste will participate actively in the work of the Human Rights Council, in the spirit of openness, cooperation and dialogue with all partners. Timor-Leste will actively consult and work with United Nations Member States, regional organizations, national human rights institutions and civil society on the issues before the Human Rights Council, including the creation of an effective universal periodic review mechanism.

Timor-Leste will encourage governments around the world to ratify the United Nations human rights treaties.

Timor-Leste's domestic commitment to uphold human rights standards

The Constitution of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste provides the blueprint for the principles and structure of the nation. All institutions of State owe their existence to, and derive their mandates and responsibilities from, this

constitutional framework where all human rights are safeguarded. The members of the Constituent Assembly solemnly reaffirmed their determination to fight all forms of tyranny, oppression, social or religious domination and segregation, to defend national independence and to respect and guarantee human rights and fundamental rights of citizens (preamble, para. 32).

Timor-Leste has a general framework for the protection and promotion of human rights and human rights norms across multiple institutions that cover: a general legal framework and domestic application of rights; human rights focal points and gender focal points across many sectors of government; human rights in parliament with a special committee on "Constitutional Affairs, Rights, Liberties and Guarantees"; comprehensive human rights training and education for government officials, judicial actors, public figures, teachers and students, non-governmental organizations and citizens.

The Government of Timor-Leste views information dissemination about human rights instruments as an integral part of individual and community empowerment of rights, and the Office of the Adviser on Human Rights to the Prime Minister and the Office for the Promotion of Equality have been and will continue to be active in this regard.

Timor-Leste's independent media, both print and broadcast, has devoted time and space to public information and contributed to the debate of human rights issues. Civil society has been an active partner in Timor-Leste through the active monitoring of human rights norms and practices.

Timor-Leste has always had full cooperation with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights both in Dili and internationally.

Timor-Leste has a history of peace, reconciliation and commitment to human rights through the establishment of the Commission on Truth and Friendship and the Commission for Reception, Truth and Reconciliation.

Core human rights treaties to which Timor-Leste is party

Timor-Leste pledges to uphold all duties and obligations as set forth in being party to the following core human rights treaties:

International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights

International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination

International Covenant against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment

Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

Convention on the Rights of the Child

International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families

Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (aiming at the abolition of the death penalty)

Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict

Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography

Other human rights and related instruments to which Timor-Leste is party

Ottawa Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction (1997)

The Geneva Conventions relating to the protection of victims of armed conflict (1949)

Protocol I to the Geneva Conventions, relating to the Protection of Victims of International Armed Conflicts (1977)

Protocol II to the Geneva Conventions, relating to the Victims of Non-International Armed Conflicts (1977)

Convention relating to the Status of Refugees (1951)

Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees

Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (1998)